

## **CHAPTER 4 – U. S. Lifesaving Medals**

- 4.A. Gold and Silver Lifesaving Medals and Certificates of Valor
  - 4.A.1. Eligibility
  - 4.A.2. Recommendations
  - 4.A.3. Presentation

## CHAPTER 4. LIFESAVING MEDALS

A. Gold and Silver Lifesaving Medals and Certificates of Valor. United States decorations that are not classified as military decorations as cited in Chapter 1 of this Manual but are authorized for wear by Coast Guard personnel. If, in the opinion of the Commandant, neither the Gold nor Silver Lifesaving Medal is appropriate, then a Certificate of Valor or an appropriate Coast Guard Public Service Award will be considered.

1. Eligibility. The Commandant awards the Gold and Silver Lifesaving Medals under the general criteria listed below:
  - a. The Gold Lifesaving Medal or the Silver Lifesaving Medal is awarded by the Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, to any person who rescues or endeavors to rescue any other person from drowning, shipwreck, or other perils of the water. If such rescue is made at the risk of one's own life, and evidences extreme and heroic daring, the medal is GOLD. If such rescue or attempted rescue is not sufficiently distinguished to deserve the medal of gold, but evidences such extraordinary effort as to merit recognition, the medal shall be SILVER. The rescue or attempted rescue must either take place in waters within the United States or subject to the jurisdiction thereof, or one or the other parties must be a citizen of the United States or from a vessel or aircraft owned or operated by citizens of the United States.
  - b. Military personnel serving on active duty normally should not be recommended for the Gold and Silver Lifesaving Medals. However, personnel may be recommended for a Lifesaving Medal if the act of heroism was performed while the member was in a leave or liberty status. Otherwise, a military award should be considered.
2. Recommendations. Recommendations for the awarding of Lifesaving Medals, or requests for information pertaining to these awards, should be addressed to Commander (a) of the Coast Guard District where the incident took place. [ **Diagram of geographical boundaries** ]. If the district is unknown, or if the incident took place outside any such district, recommendations should be addressed to Commandant (G-WPM-1), U. S. Coast Guard, 2100 2nd Street, SW, Washington, DC 20593-0001, who will forward the case to the appropriate district for verification. There is no time limitation on the awarding of Lifesaving Medals. Recommendations for the award of a Lifesaving Medal may be submitted by or on behalf of the person making or attempting a rescue. The submission package must include the following:
  - a. Satisfactory evidence of the lifesaving services performed, in the form of affidavits, made by eyewitnesses of good repute and standing testifying of their own knowledge. The opinion of witnesses that the person for whom an award is sought imperiled his or her own life or made extraordinary efforts is not sufficient. The affidavits must set forth in detail all facts and occurrences showing clearly in what manner and to what extent life was risked or extraordinary efforts made so the Commandant may judge

for himself as to the degree of merit involved. For military members, a determination of extraordinary heroism will be made in accordance with Chapter 1.B.4.

- b. A statement identifying the precise locality of the rescue or attempted rescue, whether from waters within the United States or subject to the jurisdiction thereof, or if the rescue or attempted rescue was outside such waters, whether one or the other of the parties involved was a citizen of the United States, or was from a vessel or aircraft owned or operated by citizens of the United States. The date, time of day, nature of the weather, condition of the water, the names of all persons present when practicable, the names of all persons rendering assistance, and all pertinent circumstances and data, showing the precise nature and degree of risk involved, should also be stated.
- c. The affidavits required by paragraph 2.a. above shall be made before an officer duly authorized to administer oaths. A commissioned officer of the Coast Guard may certify an individual's credibility. Credibility certification is not required if the affiant is an officer or employee of the Federal Government or a member of the Armed Forces of the United States.
- d. Upon receipt, the Commandant or cognizant district commander shall refer the recommendation to a Designated Investigating Officer for verification. The Investigating Officer shall conduct an inquiry and develop additional information and/or evidence necessary to either:
  - (1) Terminate the verification process as containing insufficient justification to continue further (provide feedback to originator, with copy to Commandant (G-WPM-1)); or
  - (2) Complete the proposed recommendation to the Commandant for final determination using Lifesaving Award Form, CG-5685. Include all relevant supporting material, and include a proposed citation.

**[Sample Lifesaving Award Form, CG-5685]**

### 3. Presentation.

- a. Gold and Silver Lifesaving Medals. The Gold and Silver Lifesaving Medals include the following award elements:

- (1) Large medal (engraved) with citation and certificate.

**[Sample Gold Lifesaving Citation]**

**[Silver Lifesaving Citation]**

**[Sample Gold Lifesaving Certificate]**

**[Silver Lifesaving Certificate]**

- (2) Lapel pin
  - (3) Miniature medal
  - (4) Ribbon bar
  - (5) The large medal, citation, certificate and lapel pin are awarded to civilians earning the Gold or Silver Lifesaving Medal. Military personnel earning the Gold or Silver Lifesaving Medal are issued all elements listed above.
- b. Certificate of Valor. The certificate of Valor will be considered, if in the opinion of the Commandant, neither the Gold nor Silver Lifesaving Medal is appropriate. The Certificate of Valor consists of a certificate only, as shown below:

**[Sample Certificate of Valor]**